Amendments to the Claims:

Claims have been found allowable. The following is a listing of the current claim set in this case.

Courtesy Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-86 (Cancelled).

Claim 87 (Previously presented). A method of preparing a fuel cell element, said method comprising:

providing a plurality of fibers and/or a porous electrode material;

depositing a nanoparticle catalyst on said plurality of fibers and/or porous electrode material;

forming nanoparticles on said plurality of fibers and/or porous electrode material using said nanoparticles catalyst;

forming a catalytically active layer comprising a substantially continuous thin film on said nanoparticles thereby forming a fuel cell element comprising a plurality of fibers bearing nanoparticles partially or fully coated with a catalytically active thin film;

wherein said thin film comprises an alloy having the formula:

$$Pt_xV_yCo_zNi_w$$

wherein:

x is greater than 0.06 and less than 1;

y, z, and w are independently greater than zero and less than 1; and

$x + y + z + w = 1$.

Claim 88 (Original). The method of claim **87**, wherein said plurality of fibers comprises a plurality of carbon fibers.

Claim 89 (Original). The method of claim **88**, wherein said plurality of carbon fibers comprise a porous electrode.

Claim 90 (Original). The method of claim **88** wherein said plurality of fibers comprise a carbon fiber paper.

Claim 91 (Original). The method of claim **87**, wherein said nanoparticle catalyst is a carbon nanotube catalyst and said nanoparticles are carbon nanotubes.

Claim 92 (Previously presented). The method of claim **91**, wherein said nanoparticles are formed by chemical vapor deposition (CVD) or said depositing a nanoparticle catalyst comprises depositing said catalyst on said fibers by chemical vapor deposition (CVD).

Claims 93 to 95 (Cancelled).

Claim 96 (Previously presented). The method of claim **91**, wherein said nanotubes have a length less than 50 μm and a width less than 100 nm.

Claim 97 (Previously presented). The method of claim **91**, wherein said nanotubes have a diameter of 50 nm to 100 nm.

Claim 98 (Cancelled).

Claim 99 (Previously presented). The method of claim **87**, wherein said thin film partially covers the nanoparticles.

Claim 100 (Previously presented). The method of claim **87**, wherein the nanoparticles are fully coated with said thin film.

Claim 101 (Previously presented). The method of claim **87**, wherein said thin film ranges in thickness from 1 to 1000 angstroms.

Claim 102 (Previously presented). The method of claim **100**, wherein said thin film ranges in thickness from 5 to 500 angstroms.

Claim 103 (Previously presented). The method of claim **100**, wherein said thin film ranges in thickness from 5 to 100 angstroms.

Claim 104 to 105 (Cancelled).

Claim 106 (Previously presented). The method of claim **87**, wherein platinum comprises from 6% up to 50% (mole ratio or atomic percentage) of said alloy.

Claim 107 (Previously presented). The method of claim **106**, wherein platinum comprises up to 12% (mole ratio or atomic percentage) of said alloy.

Claim 108 (Original). The method of claim **104**, wherein said alloy contains platinum, vanadium, nickel, and copper.

Claim 109 (Cancelled).

Claim 110 (Previously presented). The method of claim **87**, wherein x is 0.12.

Claim 111 (Previously presented). The method of claim **87**, wherein x is 0.12, y is 0.07, z is 0.56, and w is 0.25.

Claim 112 (Original). The method of claim **87**, wherein:

said providing a plurality of fibers and/or a porous electrode material comprises providing a carbon fiber paper;

said depositing a nanoparticle catalyst comprises depositing said catalyst by chemical vapor deposition;

said forming nanoparticles comprises forming carbon nanotubes; and

said forming a catalytically active layer comprising depositing a substantially continuous thin film comprising platinum or a platinum alloy.

Claims 113 to 119 (Cancelled).